

Just yesterday, we confirmed a nominee whose parents emigrated from Taiwan to become the U.S. Trade Representative. That is notable and important progress. But, unfortunately, the past few years have shown us that America has not excised the age-old demon of racism, and to too many it has become acceptable, permissible, or just shrug your shoulders. That cannot be.

With respect to the Asian-American community specifically and all communities, we must condemn rhetoric that is racist. In this case, we must condemn any rhetoric that blames the Chinese people for the coronavirus. President Trump did that, despicably, and that notion was too often encouraged by others who repeated his harsh, nasty, and bigoted words.

We must stand beside and stand up for our Asian-American brothers and sisters. Americans of every faith, every color, every gender and sexual orientation must band together against these dark forces of hate. As I said, they are always with us, but somehow after the 4 years of the Trump Presidency, they are rising to the surface and seem too acceptable to too many people. Fight them, fight them, fight them we must.

As we mourn with the people of Georgia, let us recommit ourselves to that most American of creeds that is right above the mantle where you sit, Mr. President, "e pluribus unum." Out of many, one.

America: "e pluribus unum." Out of many, one.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, on nominations, today, the Senate will vote to confirm another member of President Biden's Cabinet, Xavier Becerra, to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

In truth, Attorney General Becerra's nomination should not have taken this long. From the moment the Attorney General Becerra was announced as President Biden's pick for HHS, Senate Republicans have tried to derail his nomination. Their arguments almost verge on the ridiculous. They complain loudly that he had no direct experience as a medical professional, even though Republicans voted in lockstep to install Alex Azar, a pharmaceutical executive, who raised drug prices and tried to undermine our Nation's health law as the previous HHS Secretary.

Becerra, by contrast, has decades of standing up for working and middle-class Americans in Congress, fighting to protect and expand Medicare and Medicaid and working to safeguard our healthcare system from attacks by the Trump administration.

As the Biden administration works to defeat this pandemic, the President deserves to have his Cabinet confirmed, especially a post as important as HHS Secretary. I look forward to completing his nomination today.

A few days after Democrats gained control of the Senate, we had big tasks

ahead of us right away. I said that we had three important priorities to do quickly: One, the impeachment trial of Donald Trump; two, big and bold COVID relief; and, three, President Biden's Cabinet. We have already finished the first two priorities, and very soon we are going to finish the third.

I want to thank my colleagues, my Democratic colleagues, for working so quickly, so hard, and in such a unified team effort to allow all of this to happen. I am very proud of what we have done in these first few months.

Later today, the Senate will take its first vote on the nomination of Boston Mayor Marty Walsh to be our Nation's Labor Secretary. Early next week, after we confirm him, the Senate will have confirmed every available Cabinet Secretary and many more Cabinet-level appointments besides. That is excellent progress, and, again, I want to thank my colleagues in the Senate on both sides of the aisle for their votes in supporting these fine nominees.

What does it mean? It means the Biden administration will have the personnel in place to implement the American Rescue Plan, finish the fight against COVID-19, and bring our country roaring back. In the meantime, the Senate must continue to work to get the rest of the President's team in place.

AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021

Mr. SCHUMER. Mr. President, now on the American Rescue Plan. As Americans learn more and more about ARP, the American Rescue Plan, the more popular it becomes and the more optimistic Americans feel about our economic recovery.

Across the country, the support for the rescue plan has risen to over 70 percent. In January of this year, before President Biden took office and Democrats assumed the majority of the Senate, more than four in five Americans believed America was on the wrong track; less than one in five said it was on the right track.

Now a majority, 55 percent, believe the country is headed in the right direction. It is back on the right track. That is a dramatic turn rather quickly, but I think it is, in part, because of the good work we have done here in the Senate.

Now we have learned something else: Consumer confidence has increased faster after the passage of the American Rescue Plan than after any of the other stimulus bills passed by Congress, particularly among low- and middle-income Americans, who have suffered the most.

That is fantastic news. Americans at the top have been able to survive the pandemic much more easily than Americans at the lower end of the ladder. For that reason, economists have long feared a K-shaped recovery in which high-income earners recover quickly, while middle- and low-income earners are left behind.

The American Rescue Plan is finally restoring confidence and support for Americans at the middle and at the bottom, helping drive a robust recovery for everyone.

One crucial aspect of that recovery is support for housing. As we all know, during the pandemic, tens of millions of Americans were out of work and drained family incomes. Americans were forced into impossible choices: Do I pay the rent and utilities this month or do I buy another few weeks of groceries?

Sadly, more than 13 million Americans report that they have fallen behind on the rent, especially Black and Brown Americans.

So when Senate Democrats put together the American Rescue Plan, we made one of the most significant investments in housing assistance in recent history: more than \$20 billion in emergency aid for low-income renters, those at the greatest risk of eviction; \$10 billion to help homeowners behind on mortgages and utilities to avoid foreclosure.

We include crucial support for rural America, homeowners struggling with the mortgage, and Americans, particularly veterans, who have recently fallen into homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

The American Rescue Plan goes further in delivering housing assistance to Tribal Nations and Native Hawaiians, more than any other housing bill in history.

The American Rescue Plan, quite literally, will keep a roof over Americans' heads. It is just one of the many ways the ARP delivers relief to struggling Americans and sets the stage for a supercharged economic recovery.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Yesterday, Secretary Mayorkas testified the "border is secure and the border is not open."

Yet the situation on our southern border has required FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to be called in. So either this is the first time FEMA has been deployed just to admire a situation that is going smoothly or the administration is not being straight with the American people.

Here are the facts. Customs and Border Protection recorded more than 100,000 migrant encounters in February—100,000. That was up 28 percent from January. DHS projects the March totals will keep 2021 on pace for the most border encounters in 20 years. Unaccompanied child arrivals have jumped 63 percent, on pace to shatter all-time records.

This would be a humanitarian crisis under any circumstances, but it is even worse during a global pandemic. These thousands of unaccompanied kids are being housed in three-high bunk beds in facilities now stuffed at more than triple capacity. During the pandemic that is keeping kids out of schools and small businesses from fully reopening, these failing policies have us crowding these kids together down at the border.

And, don't forget, the Biden administration policy directs CBP to release migrants on U.S. soil while they await asylum rulings. That is without—with-out—a negative COVID test. So good luck to the communities on the border.

This isn't just a health and humanitarian crisis, though. It is a security crisis as well. New reporting suggests that multiple people arrested at the border in recent months have been matched to names on the FBI's terrorist watch list.

Democrats claim this overall influx is not because of their new administration. Well, that would be news to the migrants themselves. Some of these people have told reporters it was Democrats' rhetoric that led them to come. Some have shown up wearing T-shirts with the Biden campaign's logo on them.

Administration officials keep sending mixed messages, repeating phrases from the White House podium like "now is not the time to come." So there will be an appropriate time sometime later for people to enter our country illegally?

Speaking of mixed signals, this week, the House is voting on immigration bills. Are they leaping into action to repair the crisis? No, that is not what they have in mind. They are taking up an amnesty plan that would create a special new pathway to citizenship for illegal immigrants working in certain industries.

So to summarize, the administration can't admit they have caused the crisis. They have yet to address the crisis. And House Democrats are backing policies that would only exacerbate the wrong incentive.

ELECTIONS

Mr. McCONNELL. Now, Mr. President, on a completely different matter, I remember distant days long, long ago, way back through the mists of time, when Democrats said it would be wrong for Washington to overturn a State-certified election result.

No, wait a minute. That was 2 months ago. Two months ago, every Democrat, cable news channel, and

every liberal newspaper was melting down over some Republicans' efforts to dispute State-certified election results here in Congress. I vocally opposed those efforts myself.

But right now, as we speak, Speaker PELOSI and Washington Democrats are literally trying to overturn a State-certified election here in Congress. That is exactly what they are doing over in the House right now.

The voters of Iowa's Second District spoke in November. They counted the votes. They recounted the votes. The outcome was certified. That is the magic word, "certified," that we heard over and over and over again in November and December.

There was the opportunity to present complaints in court. Sound familiar? But the defeated Democrat passed up the opportunity to go to court. The process played out in a way that every liberal in America spent November, December, and January insisting was beyond question.

Ah, but there is a catch. This time—this time—the Republican won, and the Democrat lost. So Speaker PELOSI and Washington Democrats have set out trying to overturn the result from right here in Congress.

Congresswoman MILLER-MEEKS has been sworn in. She is here. She is working. But Democratic leadership is trying to use brute political power to kick her out and replace this Congresswoman with the Democrat whom she defeated.

You don't often see hypocrisy this blatant and this shameless so quickly.

Naturally, now that the Democrats stand to benefit from this, the concept of Washington overturning a certified election has gone from a massive outrage—a massive outrage—to a minor afterthought for much of the national media.

This is happening at the same time that House and Senate Democrats are pitching a massive takeover of all 50 States' election laws. The same people who are trying to overturn this certified election result want to ram through a bill that would let them control the democratic processes that will determine whether they keep their jobs and their majority in 2 years' time.

This isn't about principle. It is just an attempt to use a temporary majority to pull off a permanent partisan power grab.

Democratic leaders have razor-thin majorities in both Chambers. They are obviously afraid they are going to lose them, so they have decided their top priority is a Washington rewrite of election rules.

The Second District in Iowa is just the appetizer. Soon Democrats want to come for the main course. Every congressional district, all 50 States, every election for every Federal office would have to be run the way liberal Washington lawyers who donate to Democrats prefer.

Voter ID? Their bill bans it unless States implement a huge loophole that

makes it meaningless. But ballot harvesting, where paid political operatives can hand in stacks of absentee ballots with other people's names on them? It won't just be allowed; it will be mandatory nationwide.

Those are just two examples from an endless list. Outside special interests are putting tens of millions of dollars behind this.

In fact, some Democrats are so desperate to rewrite the rules of our democracy that many of them want to break the Senate's rules in order to do it. They want to break the Senate's rules in order to rewrite the rules of our democracy all over America. People will argue that it is worth destroying the legislative filibuster over H.R. 1 because the rules that govern our democracy are so important.

Of course, that is backward. The rules that govern our democracy are indeed uniquely sensitive and important. That is why this issue, of all issues, must be addressed in a fair and bipartisan way.

This isn't a uniquely justifiable place to shred the Senate's rules and ram through something partisan. It is a uniquely unjustifiable place to do it.

I worked with Chris Dodd to spearhead the Help America Vote Act back in 2002, a big landmark election bill that made it easier to vote and harder to cheat. It passed the Senate 92 to 2—92 to 2.

That is the kind of consensus you build if you want to tune up our democracy. That's the kind of broad bipartisan support that exists for making it easier to vote but harder to cheat, a far cry—a far cry from overturning a result from the last election and dictating the terms of the next one.

TRIBUTE TO JENNIFER HEMINGWAY

Mr. McCONNELL. Mr. President, now on one final matter, this week marks the end of Jennifer Hemingway's service as the Senate's Acting Sergeant at Arms. I am happy and grateful that Jennifer is actually not going anywhere. While she is stepping aside from the top job, as is custom when party control flips, Leader SCHUMER had the excellent judgment to retain Jennifer as the Sergeant at Arms Chief of Staff.

So, instead of a farewell, I just want to offer a few thanks.

I cannot imagine tougher circumstances than those in which Jennifer stepped into in this job. She had already impressed everyone as Deputy Sergeant at Arms, but when the Capitol was breached on January 6, she leapt into action on a whole new level.

It then fell to Jennifer to take the reins during challenging times. Her sure-handed leadership and institutional knowledge helped us get through a safe and successful inauguration just 2 weeks after January 6. Then came the fourth-ever Presidential impeachment trial, and there have been all the critical daily missions the Sergeant at